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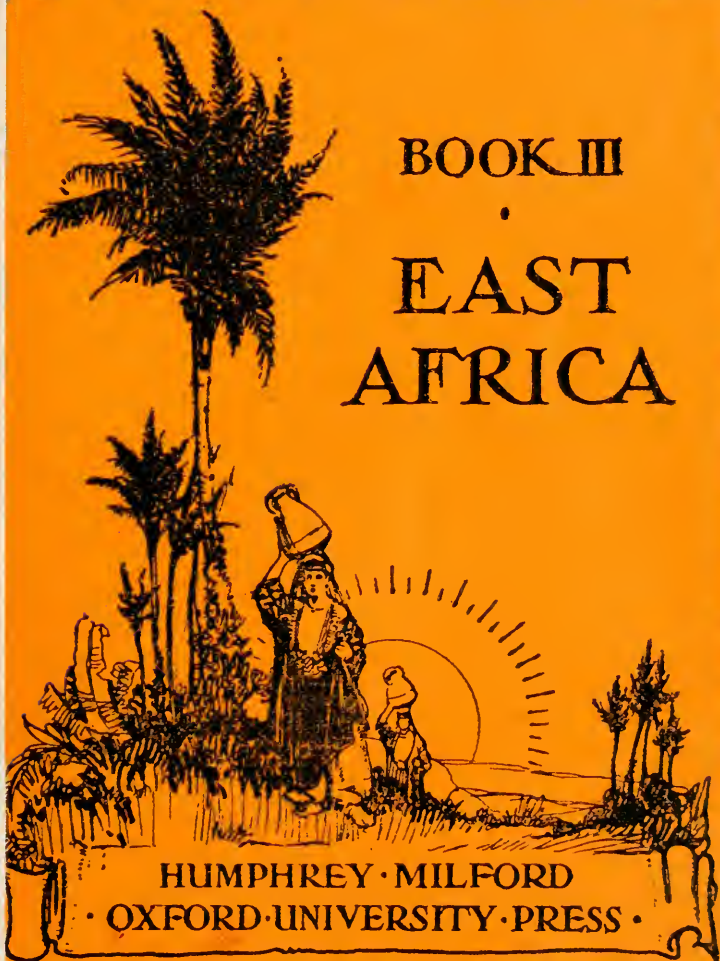
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# NATIVE · RACES · OF THE · BRITISH · EMPIRE

■ BY · W · D · HAMBLY ■

## BOOK III · EAST AFRICA



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*Native Races of the British Empire*

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THE  
NATIVE RACES OF EAST AFRICA



MASAI WARRIOR WITH LION-SKIN HEAD-DRESS.

# THE NATIVE RACES OF EAST AFRICA

BY

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(RESEARCH DEGREE, OXON.)

OXFORD DIPLOMA IN ANTHROPOLOGY

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## P R E F A C E

DURING recent years there has been a very happy tendency to change the nature of geographical teaching from a monotonous memorising of the names of natural features to a subject of living interest.

In the endeavour to effect this change there has been a serious omission in our failure to appeal to natural interests of children by making the human element a central feature of geographical work.

A study of the picturesque lives of native races of the British Empire is an absolute essential if the teacher wishes to impart the appropriate colour and setting to a subsequent course of economic, regional, and political geography.

The sharp contrast between European beliefs and customs and those of primitive people is in itself an incentive to study and interest. In addition to this, a sympathetic understanding of the many native races who are controlled by English statesmanship is necessary for the material and moral progress of dominions in the British Empire.

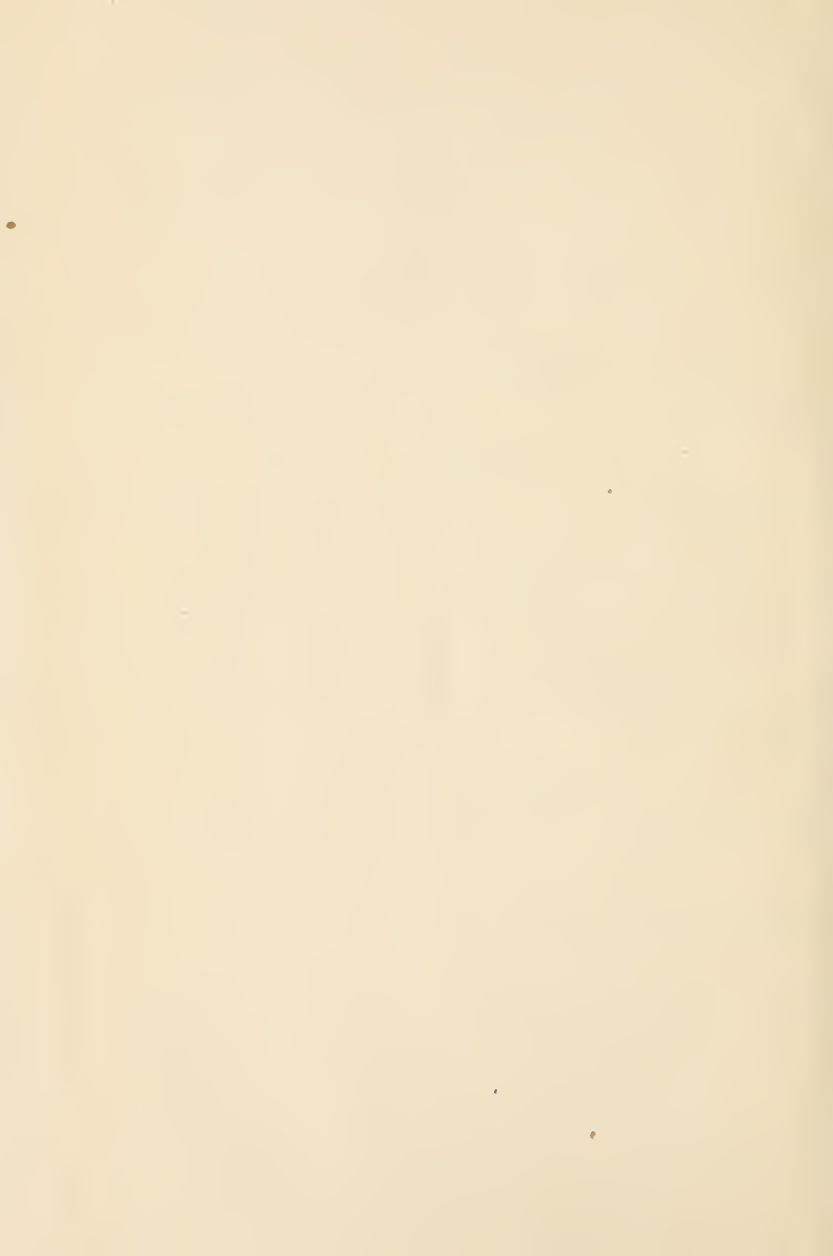
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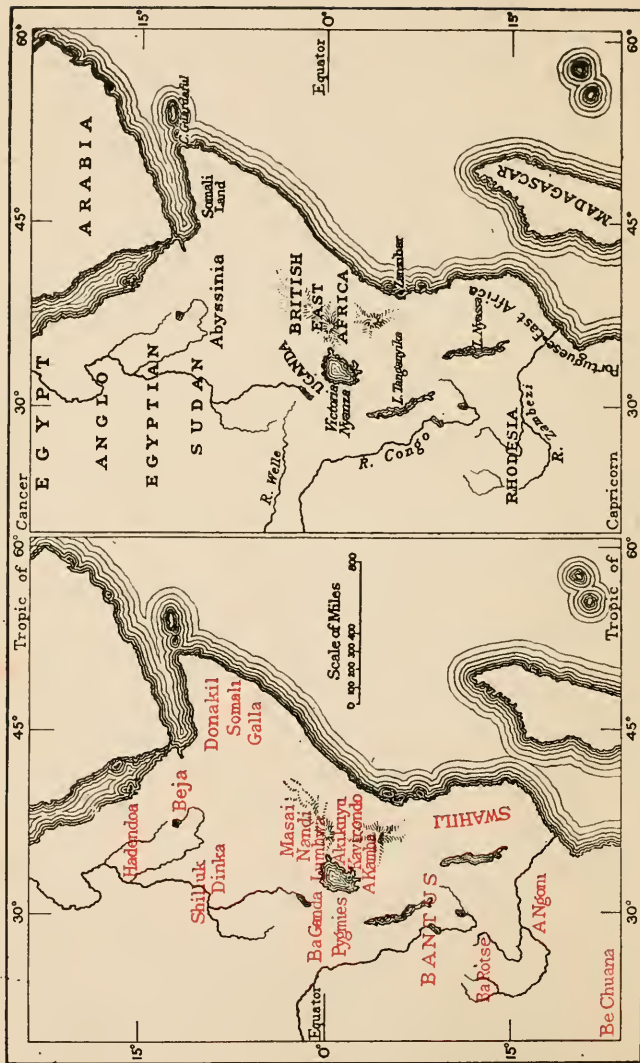
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The image contains two maps of East Africa, oriented horizontally. The top map shows physical features including the Nile river system, Lake Victoria, Lake Tanganyika, Lake Nyassa, and Lake Malawi. It also shows the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Indian Ocean. Major geographical labels include ARABIA, EGYPT, SUDAN, EGYPTIAN, SUDAN, ABYSSINIA, BRITISH EAST AFRICA, UGANDA, R. Welle, R. Congo, R. Zambesi, R. Zangwayika, Z. Nyassa, Z. Malawi, MADAGASCAR, Portuguese East Africa, and Z. Mozambique. The bottom map shows tribal distribution with labels in red ink: Hadendoo, Beja, Donakil, Somali, Galla, Shilluk, Dinka, Masai, Nandi, BaGanda, Lumbwa, Pygmies, Akikuyu, Kavirondo, Akamba, BANTU, SWAHILI, BaRotsi, and Be Chuana. A scale of miles (0 to 600) and a compass rose are also present.



# THE NATIVE RACES OF EAST AFRICA

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

A FEW years ago two dwarfs or Pygmies from the trackless forests of Uganda were bold enough to allow themselves to be brought to London, where they were exhibited and photographed. Unfortunately these little people had no one who could interpret their language, or what a wonderful story they might have told concerning life in an equatorial forest, where the foliage is in places so dense as to shut out the powerful glare of a tropical sun.

Many years ago these dwarfs were known to the highly civilised inhabitants of Ancient Egypt, and as early as 3000 B.C. the leaders of expeditions into the Sudan were charged by the Pharaohs of Egypt to return with gold dust, ivory, ornamental woods, and leopard skins; but above all these forms of wealth King Pepy II. desired a Pygmy "alive and well."

These tiny folk, whose height is rarely more than four feet nine inches, live the simple life of hunters,

almost devoid of clothing, possessing neither basket-work nor pottery, and armed only with flint-tipped spears and small poisoned arrows. Of agriculture they have no knowledge, for their time is wholly occupied by the dangerous pursuit of large and small game.

What a sharp contrast to these pygmies are the giant tribes of the Upper Nile, where the Shilluks are usually six feet four inches in height, and a man of only six feet would be regarded as short !

Many centuries ago, but at what time in the world's history it is impossible to say, a tall, dark-skinned people named Hamites entered Africa from the direction of Arabia, and so fierce were these invaders that they were able to push before them the negroes, who retreated south and west. These fighting Hamites are now represented by the Somali, Danakil, and Galla who inhabit the "Horn of Africa," where they subsist chiefly by cattle rearing ; that is to say, they are a pastoral people, who move from one well and piece of grass land to another, driving before them large herds of sheep, goats, camels, and perhaps a few horses.

Of course the Hamites mixed with the true negroes to some extent, so forming the great Bantu race which inhabits most of our Uganda Protectorate. The dreaded Masai of British East Africa are probably a cross between the Negro and the Galla. Arab tribes have for centuries wandered through East Africa as traders and slave raiders, so we have to consider a very mixed people.

What a variety of country, too, in the British



territories called the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Uganda, and British East Africa !

■ Everywhere along the banks of the Nile there is fertile country, but in the Sudan territories of Kordofan, Sennar, and other provinces, are seemingly boundless tracts of desert, broken here and there



WOMAN CRUSHING GRAIN ON A CONCAVE STONE WITH AN  
OVAL STONE ROLLER.

by rocky hills or "gebels," which perhaps attain a height of three or four hundred feet. In such places large dog-faced baboons abound, hyenas shelter in the caves, and near to the wells, usually found among the rocks, are native encampments, where dwell Arabs, Taishi, and Baggara people, who fought so determinedly against the English in 1885. Now, however, they are quite friendly,

and the traveller may be invited into the "zereba," an enclosure containing a number of circular huts with pointed roofs, and here refreshment of coffee and milk is provided. Thin miserable dogs bark defiance at the stranger, who keeps them at bay with his whip of rhinoceros hide. Little naked children play about in much the same way as white youngsters amuse themselves, but they are more delighted than their white cousins would be by the gift of a wire bracelet or a string of beads. Outside the huts kneeling women crush the grain—"dhurra"—on slabs of stone; and what an enormous pile of this crushed grain a Sudanese will eat! Seldom does he enjoy the luxury of meat. A whitish, muddy-looking liquid may be offered to the visitor; this he had better avoid, for it is native beer, made by allowing soaked "dhurra" to stand in the sunshine for several days. If the village population has reached two or three thousand, there are sure to be a few Arab merchants who have brought their calico, dried dates, and other wares all the way from Khartoum or Wad Medani. There they sit by the goods, which are laid out on the ground, possibly reading a chapter from the "Koran" or Mohammedan Bible, while a small group of natives gather round and decide how to spend the money which they have only recently learned to use, instead of bartering, that is, changing one article for another.

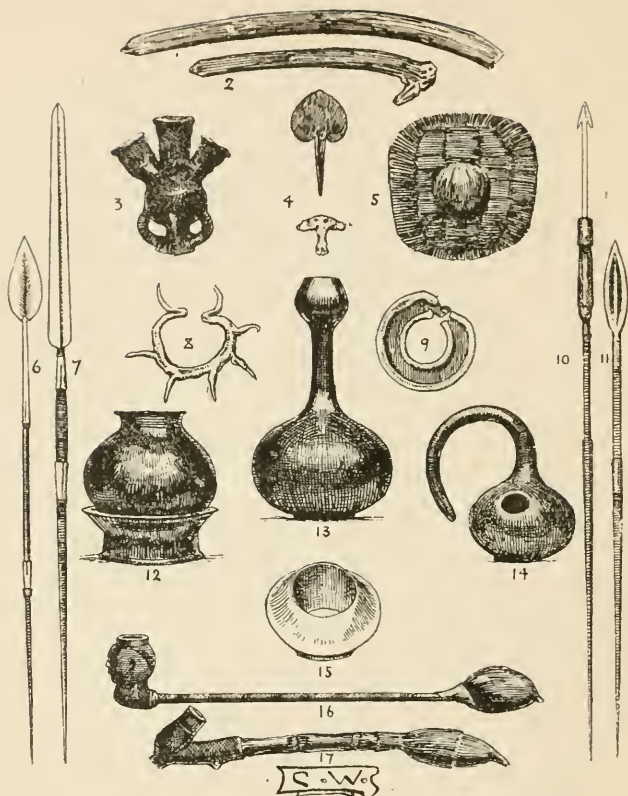
In many parts of the Sudan natives are employed on irrigation works or railways, where the workmen are paid with Egyptian coins. Even now a native prefers to have a lot of little coins, and would at

any time receive several small coins rather than one silver piece.

Uganda and British East Africa can show enormous tracts of park land, where European enterprise is engaged in cattle rearing, and native tribes such as the Masai rely on their flocks and herds for a living. In no part of the world, not even in the Amazon valley, are the forests more dense than those of Uganda, where the traveller finds Bantu tribes existing much as they have done for thousands of years.

When reading of railways connecting Port Sudan, on the Red Sea, with Khartoum, or of a line from Nairobi in British East Africa to Port Florence on Victoria Nyanza thence to the great port of Mombasa, one is apt to think that these East African Protectorates must be very advanced in civilisation, but this is not the case.

In a journey from Khartoum southward into the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, or from Port Sudan to Khartoum, the traveller is very much impressed with the luxury of the train in which he travels through the wildest scenery, comprising dense prickly bush, dreary wastes of sand, and rocky hills. Native children run away screaming on the approach of a train. In the journey from Khartoum to the Red Sea one encounters the Hadendoa people, who make themselves appear very tall and wild by allowing their hair to grow perpendicularly in a huge bush on the top of the head. In Uganda and British East Africa the traveller may have the experience of having his train charged by a buffalo, rhinoceros, or elephant, who mistakes it for some



- 1, 2. Throwing-clubs from the Nile Valley.
3. Pot from which victims for sacrifice were made to drink a magic draught to "kill" their souls, and thus prevent their "ghosts" from returning to punish their murderers.
4. Conventional hoe-blades used as money (Upper Nile).
5. Small shield of the Hamites, west of Victoria Nyanza (Uganda).
- 6, 7. Old and modern Masai spears.
- 8, 9. Fighting bracelets (Upper Nile).
10. A Dorobo elephant harpoon (East Africa Protectorate). The arrow shaft fits loosely into the haft, which falls away when the animal is struck.
11. Spear of the Hamitic tribes.
- 12, 13, 14. Pottery vases blackened with plumbago. One is in the form of a gourd (Baganda, Uganda).
15. Ivory armlet, Shilluk tribe (Upper Nile).
- 16, 17. Tobacco pipes (Upper Nile).

powerful rival, come to settle in the tropical forest which he has enjoyed undisturbed for so many years.

The savage peoples of East Africa are in many ways much more advanced in civilisation than the native tribes of Australia. The latter are simple hunters, possessing no clothing, no dwellings, no knowledge of metals, pottery making, or basket weaving. On the other hand, native inhabitants of East Africa have left the Stone Age far behind, and almost everywhere a knowledge of iron ore, smelting, and manufacture of spear-heads has been acquired. Ancient stone implements are found in all parts of Africa, but it is generally supposed that knowledge of iron came to the "Dark Continent" at a fairly early date in the history of civilisation.

Everywhere the Negro is an agriculturist, whose women folk cultivate the yam, maize, or banana, whereas a simple hunting tribe in Australia will rely entirely for vegetable foods on what can be collected in the way of wild fruits and berries.

With respect to clothing, weapons, dwellings, pottery, basketry, agriculture, and other forms of manufacture and enterprise, the inhabitants of East Africa are well advanced, while everywhere there is a great system of exchange or barter, which is not always found among more primitive savages, such as the Australian native tribes. Naturally, in so vast an area there are thousands of tribes, hence in this small book there will be space to tell only of a few of the most interesting inhabitants, who had their home in the "Dark

Continent " long before the explorers Livingstone, Stanley, Mungo Park, Baker, Burton, Speke, or even early voyagers like Father Lado, Hanno, and the centurions of Nero ventured to penetrate the wilds.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FIGHTING MASAI

**I**N the year 1895 British East Africa, formerly governed under a Royal Charter held by the Imperial British East Africa Company, came directly under the management of the British Foreign Office. Thanks to the assistance of the Masai, hostile tribes, such as the Wakamba, were completely subdued; and on our side it may be said that protection was given to the Masai against their treacherous and warlike neighbours the Akikuyu.

Perhaps the term "warlike" should no longer be applied to Masai tribesmen, for of late years they have been extremely peaceful. Misfortunes, such as loss of cattle by a disease called "rinderpest," and outbreaks of small-pox, have made this very independent tribe rely on the British Government for advice and protection.

There are certain points in which the Masai resemble Zulu tribes; for instance, their fighting men must not marry, and there is a royal family from which a chief is always selected. Some of the marriage customs are very similar, and among both Zulus and Masai there are like methods of painting warriors' shields in order to distinguish companies and larger units. Against all these points of com-



parison there is one important fact, namely, difference in language, which very strongly suggests that the Zulus and Masai are not related.

Though slaves are unknown amongst the Masai, there are a servile people named the Dorobo who have to obey the commands of their masters ; but, on the other hand, they receive wages, and must not



A MASAI VILLAGE.

be bought or sold Very probably these people who serve the Masai were at one time captured and enslaved ; now they do not possess any cattle, and as a rule the hardest work falls to their lot. An East African official, Mr. Hinde, says of these Dorobo : " They do not build kraals after the manner of the Masai, but inhabit clusters of badly built huts hidden in the bush. In war they are not allowed to accompany the Masai, or to carry shields and



spears. Their weapons consist of a bow, poisoned arrows, and a heavy wooden-handled spear, into one end of which a massive arrow-head is placed. This arrow-head is thickly smeared with poison. In attacking large game, such as the elephant, hippopotamus, or rhinoceros, they drive the arrow-head into the animal, whereupon the heavy shaft drops off and is recovered. A new tip is fitted, and the native, following the wounded animal, shoots these poisoned arrows until the creature drops from exhaustion."

A Masai chief is a person of the greatest importance; and in former days, when the tribe was about to undertake a great raid on some neighbouring people, the king would throw himself into a trance, in which he had visions of the proper way of conducting an attack or defence. On other occasions his power of second sight caused him to foretell possible calamities, and before waking he suggested some means of avoiding them.

Very probably the king practised a good deal of deception, for it is well known that he had a secret service system which informed him of all that was taking place in his own and adjacent tribes. A son of the royal house will always preserve his father's skull, which, if kept near, is supposed to bring good luck, and assist in ruling the country. The bodies of ordinary people are just allowed to remain in the bush, and a funeral, burial, and mound of stones are given only to members of the royal household.

The Masai are a very bright, intelligent, and truthful people; very rarely will a full-grown man commit a theft or tell a lie. Unlike many

African tribes, these people have no musical instruments, and their few war songs and verses, sung while herding cattle, are very simple. Generally speaking, African natives are musical, and flutes, drums, also stringed instruments are very ingeniously made.

Of the personal appearance of the Masai, Mr. Hinde has said : " The adult male Masai may be described as tall and spare, with sloping shoulders and small hands and feet. The sloping shoulders are probably due to a complete absence of manual labour, and to the constant carrying of a shield or spear in either hand, each weapon weighing eight or nine pounds. Compared with his height an average Masai could not be considered broad-chested. A habit of stooping, and leaning the head forward when running, gives a slovenly appearance, only slightly detracted from by an abnormally long stride. They are extraordinarily fleet of foot, and can run without tiring for incredible distances. Their usual pace is a long loping trot."

One very strange custom, looked upon as a means of ornamenting the head, is boring the ear lobe and inserting an object of large size. From time to time a larger object is put into the hole until the ear becomes enormously distended; some natives have been seen with ear ornaments consisting of one-pound jam tins inserted in holes made in the ear lobes.

Some women prefer lip ornaments of great size, which must be in the way at meal-times. The method of introducing these studs is similar to that employed for fitting large ear ornaments. A small hole is filled with a thin plug of wood, the size of

which is gradually increased. As a rule a lip stud projects into the wearer's mouth, so that at least two teeth have to be extracted.

Another favourite form of ornament consists of burning the skin with acid juices derived from plants. Small circular scars arranged in patterns are made, and in the Shilluk tribe of the Nile Valley men have four rows of such scars right across their foreheads. Women of the tribe have two or three rows. Sometimes these scars are made merely for ornament, or the marks may serve to show the tribe to which a person belongs.

Kavirondo men and their near neighbours, the Masai, are great warriors. In the latter tribe boys serve a long arduous military train-



MITTU WOMAN, SHOWING LIP ORNAMENT AND TATTOOING BY SCARS (CICATRISATION).

ing, and it is a proud day when they are allowed to assume the full war-time outfit. The head-dress helps to conceal people who are crouching among long grass. The armlets are merely ornamental, but the patterns on shields denote the military unit to which the warriors belong.

Men, women, and children have clean shaven heads, and it is quite an exception for a man to show any sign of beard or moustache. Although washing the body and clothing is unpopular, the Masai have great pride in their teeth, of which most

perfect care is taken, and whiteness and polish are obtained by frequent use of a small stick. Knock-



WARRIORS OF THE KAVIRONDO TRIBE IN FEATHER  
HEAD-DRESSES.

ing out the upper central teeth is a strange custom, said by the people to have been invented at a time

when there were many cases of lock-jaw, and the patients had to be fed through the hole made by extracting these teeth. In some instances small pieces of iron are worn, not as ornaments, but as a protection against, or cure for disease.

All over the Sudan this wearing of charms is common, and amongst the Mohammedan people the amulet is made by wrapping a verse from the Koran in a roll of leather, generally worn round the neck or on the arm.

The ornaments worn by Masai women are most noticeable, and the traveller is surprised that the wearers can move arms and legs sufficiently well to perform their work. Iron wire is wound round the arms from wrist to elbow and from elbow to shoulder; the legs also are encased in iron wire from ankle to knee-joint. Metal collars, which look most uncomfortable, are still made and worn by women and boys, who seem willing to tolerate any amount of discomfort rather than go without these ornaments.

Amongst the Masai there is a belief that ill luck will follow if a man is called by his own name, and to avoid this he must always be addressed by his father's name. When asked for his name, a man will always give that of his father; his own name must be inquired from some third person. As among ourselves, names are handed down from father to son, and among the Masai the father's name is almost invariably given to his favourite son. Superstitions with regard to names are carried still further. Suppose several people in the tribe have the same name, this must be changed immediately on the death of one of them, for it would be





LUMBWA WOMAN AND GIRL, SHOWING DRESS AND ORNAMENTS  
OF WIRE, ETC.

considered very unlucky to retain the name of  
some one who had just died.

Boys of the Masai tribe have a very hard, unhappy life, for not only are they made to do all the hard work of carrying, milking and driving cattle, but in addition every one treats them harshly, and a boy may not even speak to one of the warriors. Presently the conditions improve, and elder boys go out shooting birds with bows and arrows, in order to get feathers for making mantles worn by warriors. At last the youth reaches an age at which he is allowed to live in the warriors' camp, where there is strict training, and no excess in eating or drinking is allowed ; smoking is quite forbidden. As the military training advances, the boy becomes the proud possessor of a painted shield, a spear, a sword, and a knobkerry or club. These weapons are kept in perfect condition, the spear-heads being brightly polished with a hard stone. Warriors are the only people allowed to grow their hair, and each fighting man possesses a " pig-tail," of which he is very proud.

Before making an attack, Masai warriors chew bark from the mimosa tree. This acts in such a way as to make them nearly mad with ferocity, and when all are very wild and excited the enemy is engaged. Enemies face one another in long lines, and instead of a general attack being launched single pairs are engaged in combats which are a fight to the death. In case of success the victors will seize the best cattle, which are driven off to the pastures of the conquerors. It is said that the Masai never attack by night or by stealth ; there is always a preliminary warning and invitation to " come out and fight to the death."

Although young boys have such a hard time in order to make them fit to be trained as fighters, girls of the tribe are very kindly treated. Young maidens spend a great deal of time in singing, dancing, and ornamenting themselves; as a rule, they do not even cook their own food. Old women have all the hard menial work to perform, and very hard is their lot in building huts, carrying loads when the tribe moves, collecting firewood, and keeping night watches. Speaking of old women in the Masai tribe, Mr. Hinde says: "As long as she can crawl about she continues her labours, and death is the only release she can hope for." As a rule, a girl becomes the wife of a man who can afford to pay goats and cattle for her; but the Masai parents consider their daughter's wishes, and she is not obliged to become the wife of a man she does not like.

The life of Masai people depends almost entirely on herds of goats and cattle, which are driven from pasture to pasture. Reptiles, birds, insects, and fish are never eaten, grain only at times when meat is scarce, while a favourite food is blood, drawn from the neck of a cow by making a small puncture with an arrow, in such a way as to avoid injuring the animal severely. Herds of cattle, though very docile and easily managed by small children, are extremely fierce, and well able to protect themselves against attacks made by hyenas or a leopard.

Though so bold in warfare the Masai are not a race of hunters, and big game such as lions, leopards, or the rhinoceros are attacked only when the skin



is required, or the animal has become a menace to the herds of cattle.

Among the industries, smelting of iron in clay furnaces is very important, as it provides spear-heads and ornaments. These are not moulded by allowing molten metal to run into vessels, but the ore, heated in a charcoal fire, is beaten into shape while resting on a block of hard wood or stone.

Clay taken from river beds serves as material for making earthenware vessels, which are baked hard in a fire after being moulded by hand into the shape required. Other vessels are made from gourds, while as a pastime the carving of wooden pipes and ornamenting the bowls is very common.

Hut building with such materials as hides, mud, and sticks, likewise the construction of a stone and bush enclosure round the village, take a great deal of time ; so also does a complete removal to fresh pastures. Hence in one way or another the time of these people is fully occupied, and it is a great mistake to suppose that all black people are lazy and indolent.

There must, of course, be time for leisure, which is sometimes spent in telling the stories given in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER III

### MASAI STORIES AND BELIEFS

AT all periods of the world's history human beings have been fond of stories concerning animals, and the Masai are no exception to the general rule. Here is a story of the hare and the elephants, one of a number collected by Mr. Hollis, who resided among the Masai for several years :

" A hare, that lived near a river, one day saw some elephants going to the kraals of their father-in-law. He said to the biggest one, who was carrying a bag of honey : ' Father, ferry me across, for I am a poor person.' The elephant told him to get on his back, and when he had climbed up they started.

" While they were crossing the river the hare ate the honey, and as he was eating it he let some of the juice fall on the elephant's back. On being asked what he was dropping, he replied that he was weeping, and that it was the tears of a poor child that were falling. When they reached the opposite bank the hare asked the elephants to give him some stones to throw at the birds. He was given some stones, which he put into the honey bag. He then asked to be set down, and as soon as he was on the ground again he told the elephants to be off.

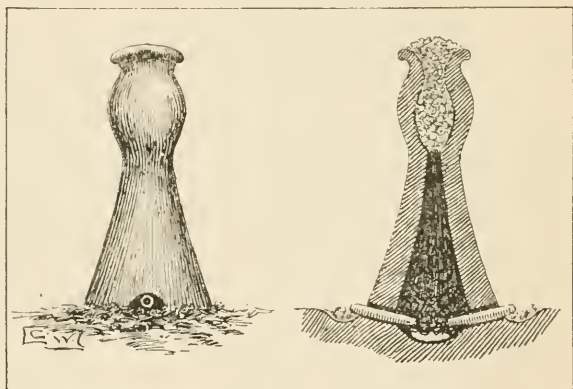
" They continued their journey until they reached

the kraal of the big one's father-in-law, where they opened the honey bag. When they found that stones had been substituted for honey they jumped up and returned to search for the hare, whom they found feeding. As they approached, however, the hare saw them and entered a hole. The biggest elephant thrust his trunk into the hole and seized him by the leg, whereupon the hare cried out : ' I think you have caught hold of a root ! ' On hearing this the elephant let go and seized a root. The hare then cried out : ' You have broken me ! You have broken me ! ' which made the elephant pull all the harder, until at length he became tired.

" While the elephant was pulling at the root the hare slipped out of the hole and ran away. As he ran he met some baboons, and called out to them to help him. They inquired why he was running so fast, and he replied that he was being chased by a great big person. The baboons told him to go and sit down, and promised not to give him up. Presently the elephant arrived, and asked if the hare had passed that way. The baboons inquired whether he would give them anything if they pointed out the hare's hiding-place. The elephant said he would give them whatever they asked for, and when they said they wanted a cup full of his blood, he consented to give it them, after satisfying himself that the cup was small. The baboons then shot an arrow into his neck and the blood gushed forth. After the elephant had lost a considerable quantity of blood he inquired if the cup was not full. But the baboons had made a hole in the bottom of the cup, which was still half empty." The elephant

suddenly felt very tired, lay down and died, upon which the hare came from his hiding-place to continue his journey.

Some stories are concerned with the work of evil spirits, and, of course, tales connected with warriors' exploits are very popular. Before setting out on a raiding expedition a band of warriors consulted a



PRIMITIVE SMELTING FURNACE, AND SECTION OF SAME,  
SHOWING BLAST-PIPES, FUEL, AND ORE.

wise man of the tribe, known as the "medicine man," who said that the expedition would be unsuccessful if any warrior killed a monkey while on the march. A coward who heard this made up his mind that he would kill a monkey, then perhaps the attacking band would run instead of fighting. On the way to the scene of the combat this coward observed some monkeys, so, pretending to stay behind in order to fasten his sandal, he killed one of the animals, then quickly rejoined his comrades,

who by this time were near the village they intended to attack. Outside a kraal an old man was seated, and at once a club was thrown at him by one of the Masai warriors. This did not appear to harm him in the slightest, for he only complained of the flies, in fact he seemed to be proof against all the clubs and spears launched against him. Presently he rose and, single-handed, put to flight the whole band of attackers, who then knew that one of their number had been false. Steps were taken to find out who had disobeyed the command of the old witch doctor, and suspicion fell on the warrior who stayed behind to fasten his sandal. He became very much afraid when questioned by his comrades, and on confessing that he had spoiled the expedition by killing a monkey, he was speared to death on the spot.

A story such as this shows the Masai to be very superstitious people who believe in omens and ill-luck. They have a word "ngai," which means anything strange that they do not understand, and this is given to railways, telegraph lines, and thunderstorms, all of which are very terrifying and mysterious. The people believe in four gods, each distinguished by a colour. The black god and white god are good, the red god is bad, and the blue god neither good nor bad. It is believed that all these gods lived in the sky, but only the Black God came to earth as a man, and from him are descended the Masai people, who still live near the lofty Mount Kenia, the supposed dwelling-place of the Black God.

Compared with other peoples of Africa the Masai

are not very superstitious, though no doubt we should think their beliefs very strange and fanciful. No poor man is thought to have a soul that can live after his body is dead, but the spirit of a rich man is believed to enter a snake, which then visits the tribe and acts in a peculiar way to warn them of danger. When rain is badly needed, all women and children gather bunches of grass, which are held in the hand, while they stand in a circle and pray to the Black God to send water for their pastures and cattle.

A thief is punished by a heavy fine of cattle or weapons, which have to be paid over to the man from whom goods have been stolen. Sometimes a thief is severely beaten ; this is usually done when he has been previously detected in crime, while if a third theft is committed by the same person his hands are burned with a hot stick.

A murderer has to pay all his flocks and herds to the relatives of his victim ; this is known as paying " blood-money," a practice which was common in our own country in Saxon times. Some laws are very amusing : for instance, if two men fight, the injured person may claim eight cows for loss of a limb, one cow for a tooth, two cows for the loss of two or three teeth ; so quarrelling may prove a very expensive pastime.

What then is the end of this life of fighting and cattle rearing ? In the case of a chief, respectful burial and a belief that the soul of a great man will visit the relatives in the form of a snake. But for a poor man there is no funeral ; the body is carried to the bush, where it is soon devoured by hyenas.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE AKIKUYU PEOPLE

LIVING quite near to the Masai, but differing from them in very many ways, are the Akikuyu, whose territory near Mount Kenia could be reached by a long train journey from Mombasa toward Nairobi, followed by several hundred miles of travelling on foot.

For centuries the Masai and Akikuyu have been bitter enemies, and in the old days the former used to punish their neighbours for selling captives to Arab slave traders. The Masai are a pastoral people depending entirely on their herds, which must have abundant pasture; while, on the other hand, the Akikuyu are tillers of the soil. In order to make a tract of land clear for sowing, they are in the habit of burning large tracts of forest, a practice which annoys the Masai, because herds of cattle shelter under the trees, where they find fresh grass, when all the country exposed to the sun is parched and withered.

In warfare these two tribes, the Masai and Akikuyu, employ many different methods, for whereas the former are always bold and open in attack, the latter are cowardly and treacherous, always preferring to lie in wait for small bands of enemies, who may be taken at a disadvantage.



When reporting on the Akikuyu tribes, Mr. Hinde, the British Commissioner, says :

“ They plant gardens with bananas and Indian corn, and live almost entirely on vegetable food, their flocks being inconsiderable. Honey forms a staple element of their diet. This they collect

by hanging oblong honey boxes, made of the hollow trunk of a juniper, in the trees, and smoking the bees out.

“ They till and cultivate the ground, but, as it is not manured, the soil is quickly exhausted, and the burning down of large tracts of forest is resorted to as a means of procuring fresh land.

“ The Akikuyu are a well-built people, with the broad Negro type of countenance



A KIKUYU MAN.

and feature. Occasionally they wear their hair long, but more often it is twisted into a sort of fringe about three inches in length. The young men cover their person with mutton fat and red clay, which renders them exceedingly offensive. It has of late years become customary for them to carry both shields and spears; the former they



have copied from the Masai, the latter are of their own design, and have a leaf-shaped blade about a foot in length and four inches broad, tapering to a point. The handle is wooden, with an iron spike about six inches long at the other end. The Akikuyu carry swords, and use bows and poisoned arrows. They grow tobacco, which they mix with potash and use as snuff ; this they carry in a small bottle suspended by a chain around the neck."

Shaving the head is a custom copied from the Masai, but although Akikuyu women wear many beads, they do not, like Masai women, decorate themselves with large quantities of iron wire and chains.

Unlike many African tribes, the Akikuyu do not keep poultry, for they have a theory that the crowing of cocks at night has in time past revealed to an enemy the position of their village.

These villages are by no means easy to find, and so securely are they enveloped by the bush, that a traveller might pass quite near without knowing that human beings were dwelling close at hand. Both the Akikuyu and Wakamba tribes have learned that seclusion in the bush is the best way of avoiding onslaughts by the Masai warriors, and this secrecy has also



A KIKUYU GIRL, SHOWING  
EAR ORNAMENTS.

made the task of the British Government very difficult.

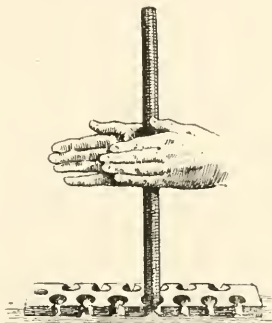
It is a mistake to suppose that in all parts of Africa there is an abundance of wild fruit. The Akikuyu live almost entirely on vegetable foods, such as millet, maize, and bananas, but these they have to cultivate, the women of the tribe being responsible for all the hoeing and hard work in the fields, in addition to the grinding of the grain with heavy stones. Other tasks borne by women include the cooking of all foods except meat, bringing home produce from the fields, and collecting large bundles of firewood. Baking of pottery, too, is an occupation for females, who appear to do all the hardest and most important work of the tribe.

Mr. Routledge gives a list of foods commonly found among the Akikuyu people, whom he has closely studied. The vegetable foods consist of maize, beans, or the tubers of the arum lily, and its green stems. A favourite food for carrying on a journey is a cake made by boiling together various kinds of grain ; and as a raw food, a grain very like canary seed is used. The Akikuyu like sweet foods, so honeycomb and sugar-cane are very popular. When meat is used it is generally made up into sausages, which are tied with the inner bark of a bush. Native beer is manufactured by allowing sugar-cane juice to ferment.

Huts are circular, with pointed roofs, and as a rule there is no opening but a small door, so that lighting and ventilation are not enjoyed. As the roof is thatched, smoke from the fire can filter through, so there is no need to provide a special hole for its

escape. In bridge building the Akikuyu are very expert, and in a short time a stream is crossed by a suspension bridge of creepers, cleverly arranged so as to be hidden among foliage, and so screened from the view of enemies.

Fire is produced by means of rapidly twirling a hard shaft of wood, the lower end of which rests in a hole formed in a soft piece of wood, the dust from which forms the tinder. Dry grass is placed on the tinder, ignited by friction; and, as a rule, two natives, one twirling a fire stick while the other blows the tinder, will produce a flame in three-quarters of a minute. In order to avoid repeating this fire-making process too often, smouldering brands are carried during a journey.



FIRE-MAKING BY TWIRLING.

Among the important industries are iron smelting and string making from bark and animals' tendons. The former industry is of very great antiquity, and in the oldest legends and stories there are references to articles made of iron.

## CHAPTER V

### SOCIAL LIFE OF THE AKIKUYU

A HOMESTEAD consisting of only one hut will have its own little enclosure, but it is quite possible that a rich man will have several huts, one for each of his wives. In former times, when fighting was more common than it is to-day, the enclosure surrounding the huts was very carefully concealed in green foliage, through which one small entrance was made.

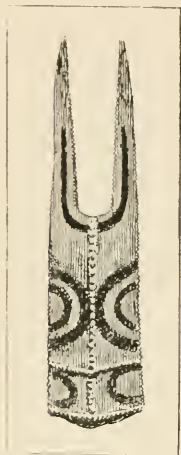
Within this enclosure or compound the traveller will see the daily task of corn grinding, pottery making, and the manufacture of string bags going on apace. The last-named occupation is generally regarded as the work of little girls, whose small brothers are equally busy herding the goats. The women must be extremely strong, as a result of their hard work in carrying loads and cultivating the fields. Mr. Routledge speaks of "a girl of about thirteen who came into the camp one night about 11 p.m., bearing a load of bananas weighing 30 lb., which she had carried some fourteen miles since daybreak."

No wonder that a baby girl is welcome, when there are so many tasks for the wives and women to perform. During early childhood the baby is

carried to the fields on the mother's back, and although the heat is intense and the flies are a great nuisance, Akikuyu children are very good and contented. Strange to say, they do not play games, but seem to be content when sitting still in the shade ; later in life, however, when grown up, there is a good deal of time and energy given to dancing, which, along with music, is very popular. A girl is married at seventeen ; then she goes to the hut prepared by her husband, who probably paid about thirty goats and a few sheep for his bride. The girl, however, is not obliged to marry any man who can pay this amount of wealth to her father, and nowhere among savage peoples has the girl a greater freedom of choice. When a maiden wishes to show her parents that she is in love, she puts small patches of honey on her cheeks and forehead ; this prevents the father and mother from making any arrangements for her betrothal to a man for whom she has no affection. There is a great deal of respect shown to old women, probably because they are thought to have the power to cast a spell upon, or give the " evil eye " to, a person who has offended them.

Among European peoples, boys and girls grow gradually into manhood or womanhood, but with the Akikuyu there is a special ceremony at which boys and girls are said to be turned into men and women. For many months before the great event all boys who intend to be initiated practise dancing for long periods, so that they will not be too readily exhausted when the day arrives for the public ceremony. The dress of a novice is most elaborate,

consisting of cat skins, cowrie shells, dancing bells, and paint, which covers the entire body with wavy lines. Shaving of the head is part of the preparation, and only a small tuft of hair is left in the centre of the crown. The dance takes place close to a sacred tree, and when all the details of this important ceremony are over, the young people are considered to be men and women of their tribe.



WOODEN SHOULDER  
SHIELD, WORN  
ON THE LEFT  
SHOULDER AT  
DANCES.

The closing scenes in the life of a tribesman are very sad, for should he be poor and friendless, he may be left to die alone, and only in the case of a man of great age and riches is there a respectable burial. Generally the body is left in the hut where the patient died, so, of course, it is very quickly dragged away and devoured by hyenas.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE BAGANDA TRIBE OF UGANDA

**H**ALF a century ago the Baganda might have been regarded as one of the most numerous tribes in Africa, but of late years losses through civil war, famine, and sleeping sickness have reduced



A BAGANDA HOUSE.

the numbers to about a million. The Baganda are the most advanced in civilisation among all Bantu peoples, and for many years their dress, habits, and extreme politeness have been noted by travellers, who may now approach within 200 miles of Baganda territory by making a comfortable



train journey of 600 miles from Mombasa to Lake Victoria Nyanza.

The greater part of the surface of Uganda is hilly, fertile, and well watered, and the slopes of the hills are cultivated by natives who grow plantain trees, maize, sugar-cane, tobacco, and coffee. Here and there dense forests are to be found, and in such regions the Baganda hunt the elephant, buffalo, and hippopotamus.

When speaking of this tribe, the Rev. J. Roscoe says: "The Baganda are the only Bantu tribe in Eastern Equatorial Africa who do not mutilate their persons; they neither extract their teeth nor pierce their ear lobes"; nor do they practise any of the deformations which have been related in chapters concerning the Masai and Akikuyu.

There are to be found clans with Roman features, and others varying from this type to the broad nose and thick lips of a Negro; so too, in build there are tall athletic figures over six feet in height, while, on the other hand, there are thick-set short-built men only about five feet in height.

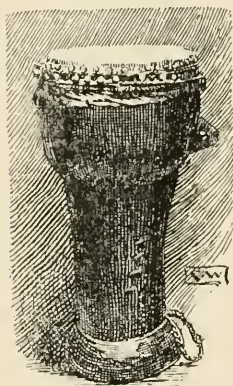
The colouring, too, varies from jet black to copper colour; and stranger still, there are some pure negroes whose skin colour is almost white. These people were at one time kept as curiosities in an enclosure near to the hut of a native king or great chief. The hair of the Baganda is invariably short, black, crisp and woolly; hair on the face is either shaved or pulled out, and any sign of beard or moustache is regarded as very ugly.

Naturally, in a country where big game abounds, hunting is not only a pastime of chiefs and nobles,

but a very important means of obtaining a food supply. As a rule, elephant hunters were men who had been trained from very early childhood, so that they became close observers of these animals, followed every movement of the herd, and became adepts in launching spears from a secure position in the tops of lofty trees. The spear had a broad leaf-shaped blade six inches long, mounted on a thick wooden shaft, and a strong arm was necessary in order to deliver a powerful, accurate throw. The night before the hunt these spears were sharpened, then placed by the altar of Dungu, the god of hunting, to whom an offering of beer and a goat was made. At times the Baganda huntsman was more open in his methods of attack, and several natives, armed only with spears, would creep right up to the herd, and after launching their weapons would depend on rapid flight for safety.

Elephant traps were very common, and an unwary animal caught his feet in a cord which released a heavy spear from the branches above. All the hunters took up the chase of this wounded creature, which was followed until it fell exhausted. Foot traps, causing an animal to tumble on a sharp spear, placed point uppermost in a pit, were commonly used, and what seems most strange, the nerves from the tusks of a dead animal were always carefully buried. The Baganda are very superstitious, and it was thought that the ghost of an animal killed in the chase would attach itself to the buried nerves, instead of haunting the men who launched the spears or laid the traps.

Before hunting the lion or leopard, a chief would beat the war drum in order to collect his people, who often went forth a thousand strong. A few men followed the animal to its lair, then returned to their chief to report the exact position. This having been done, a noisy party, shouting and beating drums, surrounded the animal's hiding-



LIZARD-SKIN DRUM,  
LANGO TRIBE, UGANDA  
PROTECTORATE.

place. A trapped animal will, of course, fight very fiercely, after rushing first in one direction then in another trying to find a means of escape, and, as a rule, some one was severely wounded before the creature was killed with clubs and spears.

The hippopotamus was hunted, not for food, but because it proved such a danger to canoe men, and at night did great damage by wandering over cultivated plots of ground. A spear trap might be set in the path from a river to pastures, or harpoons were launched by men in canoes, which the animal frequently attacked and overturned.

The Baganda live very largely on vegetable food, and, as is so often the case among primitive people, the women do all the field work. True, the husband clears the ground of all shrubs and tall grass, but when this work is done his wife performs all the digging, sowing, and collecting of

the harvest. Ashes from burnt leaves, when washed in by the heavy rains, fertilise the soil, and success is sought by sacrificing a fowl and pouring out an offering of beer at the roots of trees, while the husband says: "Give me this land, and let it be fruitful, and let me build my house here, and have children."

In addition to their hunting and agriculture, the Baganda are very fond of trade and barter, and in many villages there is a market-place where a salesman must pay fees in order to get permission to sell his wares. The king of the Baganda receives these market dues, which amount to one-tenth of the produce sold, and as the produce offered for sale comprises animals, fish, eggs, salt, sweet potatoes, peas, beans, pottery, tobacco, axes, hoes, and rope, the amount of money due to royalty must be very great. At the end of a busy market day many boys are ready to clean up the market-place, in reward for which they get scraps of meat from the slaughter-house, a few coffee berries, or a little salt. Money consists of cowrie shells, two hundred of which are needed to buy a large earthenware pot; five to ten are given for a tobacco pipe; and in striking such bargains as these the busy marketing day soon draws to a close.

## CHAPTER VII

### SOCIAL LIFE OF THE BAGANDA

A TRAVELLER among the Baganda tribe may soon learn that the people are divided into groups or clans, each of which regards some animal as its particular badge or emblem. An arrangement of this kind is not peculiar to the Baganda, or even to African natives. Indians of North America, Australian natives, and most tribes of the South Sea Islands have a similar grouping of the members in clans or "totems," each having a plant or animal which is treated with great respect.

There are a great many rules that members of the clan have to observe. For instance, among the natives of the "Leopard" clan no one may eat meat which has been torn, so that any animal killed or injured by a wild beast must be sold to some other clan. The "Leopards" were extremely important people, because from them the king and members of the royal family were chosen. In addition to the "Leopards," there are people who call themselves "Lions," "Otters," "Elephants," and even "Grasshoppers" and "Mushrooms." Usually there is a story or tradition which is supposed to account for the beginning of this strange

arrangement. People of the "Lion" clan say that soon after King Kintu came to his throne, many, many years ago, he went out to hunt a lion and an eagle. When the lion skin was dressed, King Kintu stood upon it and announced to his people that, in future, the lion was to be their sacred emblem, and although peoples of other clans might hunt the creature, members of the "Lion" group were never to take the life of their sacred animal. Three animals, the lion, leopard, and eagle, are all regarded as the special property of kings, who alone are permitted to use the skins.

The Baganda are a very warlike people, who have constantly increased their territory at the expense of neighbours, with whom they have at all times been



A BAGANDA MAN.

ready to quarrel. At times the king would lead his army in person, or again the task might be given to generals, who were always elaborately dressed in skins of animals. No mercy was shown to a defeated people, who were, of course, despoiled of everything worth possessing, and a great deal of the booty was claimed by the king

of the victorious people. Mr. Roscoe says : " After the spoil had been divided, the general gave the order to the chiefs to disband their men and let them go home. The important chiefs accompanied the general to the capital to report to the king before they were allowed to visit their homes ; but if there had been a reverse, they, too, went to their country residences for some ten days before visiting the king. People lined the roads to welcome the army ; women ran to meet their husbands with gourds of water, took from them their weapons, and were proud to carry these as they marched along the crowded roads. Warriors dashed at imaginary foes, drums were beaten, fifes were played, and songs of victory were sung."

In times of peace the Baganda amuse themselves by relating interesting stories, a few of which are given in the following pages.



## CHAPTER VIII

### STORIES TOLD BY THE BAGANDA

AT one time cats were servants of fowls, to whom they had to pay tribute in the form of flying ants, done up in small packets. This duty became very irksome, and on several occasions the cats were very much inclined to rebel, but were afraid to do so when the fowls threatened to burn them with their red combs. At one time, when the cats' fire had gone out a mother cat sent her young one to make fire by placing some dry grass near to the red comb of an old rooster who was very drunk and fast asleep.

Presently the kitten returned with the report that he could not get a light from the red comb of the sleeping cock. This aroused the curiosity of the mother cat, and at once she went and convinced herself that the cock's comb, though red, was quite cold. She then wakened the rooster, and along with other cats declared that never again would she serve the fowls. The fowls saw that their deception was no longer of any use, so they came to the nearest village and asked man for his protection against the cats.

A lion and a crocodile had a quarrel during which each claimed to be the stronger animal.

The former said : " I can kill the fiercest buffalo," to which the latter replied : " And I can kill the hippopotamus in the water." The crocodile was basking on the mud near to the river's bank where the lion was devouring a buffalo. Very quickly the crocodile seized the leg of the buffalo and pulled both that creature and the lion into the river, where they were drowned. This incident filled the crocodile with confidence, so that he soon began to boast of his strength, especially to the young son of the lion he had killed. Naturally the young lion was very angry, and ever in search of revenge, which he took one day when the crocodile attempted to play his old trick of pulling the young lion and his prey into the river. On this occasion the lion proved stronger, for not only did he haul out the crocodile on to the mud flats, but quickly settled him with blows from his powerful paws. Now the Baganda people declare that the lion and the crocodile are of equal strength, the former being king of beasts on land, and the latter sovereign of the river.

Now we come to the closing scenes in the life of this interesting Baganda tribe. Sickness is never put down to natural causes, such as chills, over-eating, or heavy drinking. It is always supposed that an enemy has worked magic against the sick man, and the medicine man of the tribe will usually bleed the patient in order to let out the evil magic. The body of the king is embalmed and buried with great reverence, and even for the most humble people there is respectful interment ; methods which are very different from those adopted by the

Masai and Akikuyu, who leave their dead to be devoured by hyenas.

BOOKS FOR SCHOOL REFERENCE LIBRARY

*Britain across the Seas*, by Sir H. JOHNSTON.

*British Central Africa*, by A. WERNER.

*The Baganda*, by the Rev. J. ROSCOE.

*With a Pre-Historic People*, by W. SCORESBY ROUTLEDGE.

*The Masai*, by A. C. HOLLIS.

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